

Emerging Transportation Needs: Implementing “Complete Streets”

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE
REVENUE SUBCOMMITTEE
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Council of Governments

2040 PLAN

NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



NMDOT's long range plan, the 2040 Plan, was adopted in 2015. This plan expresses the importance of accommodating all roadway users. The 2040 Plan provides performance measures to assess how these goals are being met. The processes involved to reach the goals will be developed in a series of implementation plans set forward by the 2040 Plan.

Although the 2040 Plan is an important step towards Complete Streets practices, stand-alone statewide Complete Streets legislation would provide critical support for implementation.

CONCEPT OF “COMPLETE STREETS”

"Complete Streets are designed, operated and maintained to enable safe access for all users. People of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across streets in a community, regardless of how they are traveling."

– National Complete Streets Coalition

Complete Streets minimize conflicts between users of public transportation, drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists in the public right-of-way.



An ideal Complete Streets policy:

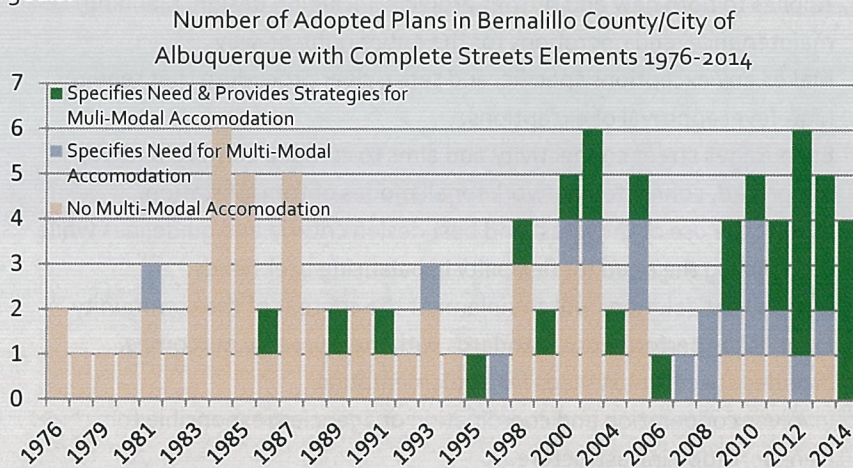
1. Includes a vision why a community wants to complete its streets.
2. Specifies that access for “all users” includes people of all ages and abilities who travel by walking, bicycle, transit and auto.
3. Applies to both new and retrofit projects, including design, planning, maintenance, and operations for the entire right-of-way.
4. Makes any exceptions specific, and sets a clear procedure that requires high-level approval of exceptions.
5. Encourages street connectivity and aims to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected network for all modes of transportation.
6. Directs the use of the latest and best design criteria and guidelines while recognizing the need for flexibility in balancing user needs.
7. Directs that solutions will complement the context of the community.
8. Establishes performance standards with measureable outcomes.
9. Includes specific next steps for implementation.
10. Involves cooperation and coordination of agencies responsible for transportation infrastructure.

COMPLETE STREETS IN NEW MEXICO AND U.S.

Complete Streets policies demonstrate a community's intent to pursue transportation practices that are inclusive of all modes. Below is a list of Complete Streets policies passed in New Mexico.

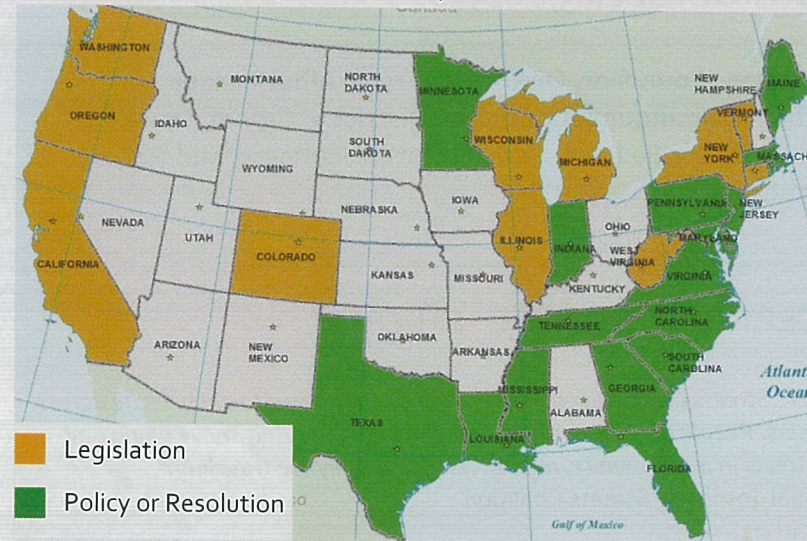
- ~ Santa Fe Metropolitan Planning Organization, 2007 (resolution)
- ~ Las Cruces Metropolitan Planning Organization, 2008 (resolution)
- ~ Town of Mesilla, 2008 (resolution)
- ~ City of Las Cruces, 2009 (resolution)
- ~ Doña Ana County, 2009 (resolution & design guide)
- ~ Mid-Region Metropolitan Planning Organization, 2011 (resolution), 2015 (policy and design guide)
- ~ Farmington Metropolitan Planning Organization, 2015 (policy and design guide)
- ~ City of Albuquerque, 2015 (ordinance)
- ~ Bernalillo County, 2015 (ordinance)

Over time, more planning polices such as corridor studies and sector development plans have called for the importance of accommodating all modes. Below is a graph of adopted plans in the Bernalillo County and City of Albuquerque that shows the transition over time with adopted plans calling for better multi-modal accommodation and setting forth strategies to reach those goals.



At the national level, 31 states and Puerto Rico have adopted Complete Streets policies. Many of these policies are legislation such as statues, acts, and laws. In the map below, the states shown in orange have adopted Complete Streets legislation. The states shown in green have adopted a policy or resolution, either by the state, the department of transportation, or both.

As of 2014, States with Complete Streets Legislation or State or Dept. of Transportation Complete Streets Policies



2040 PLAN – NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NMDOT should consider submitting the 2040 Plan to the National Complete Streets Coalition to be evaluated as a statewide Complete Streets policy for 2015.

Although the 2040 Plan is an important step towards Complete Streets practices, stand-alone, statewide Complete Streets legislation would provide critical support for implementation.

BENEFITS OF COMPLETE STREETS

- **Economic Development:**

Urban and rural centers where it is easier to walk and bicycle support local economic growth, allow more space for development, and reduce pressure for space for parking.

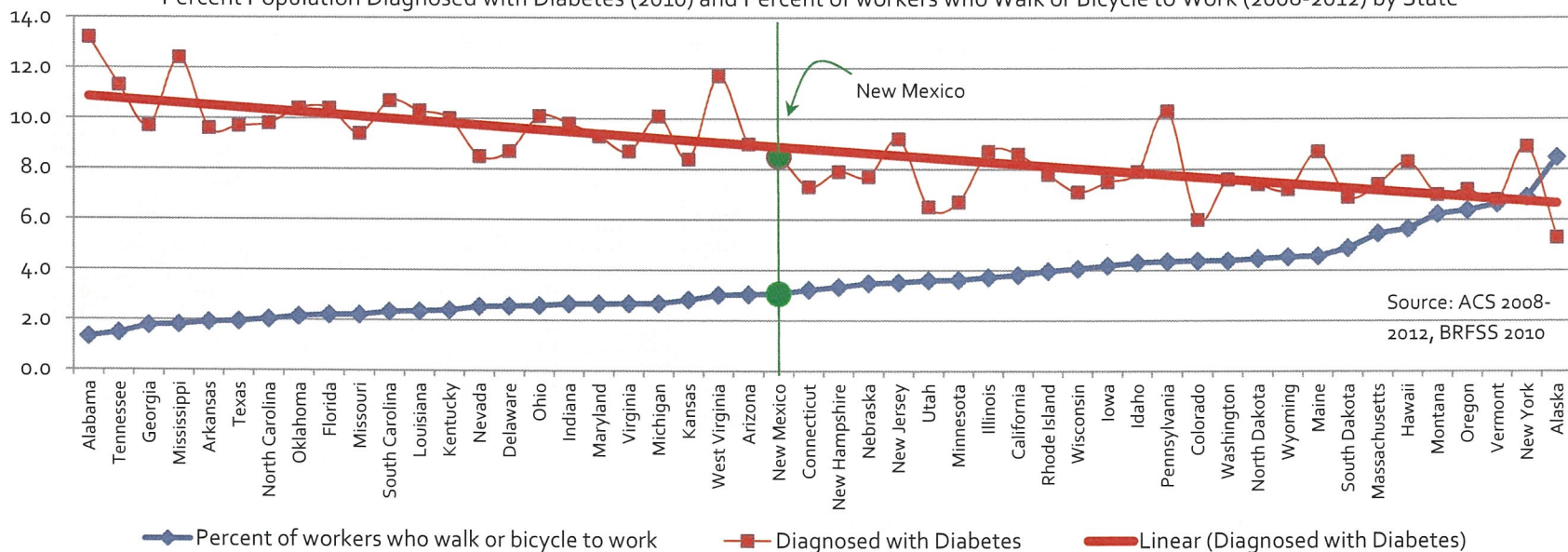


New Development after Central Ave Complete Street Project in Albuquerque (As of 2015, 7 new businesses and 3 new housing projects)

- **Safety:** New Mexico has been identified as a “Focus State” by the Federal Highway Administration for improving pedestrian safety. From 2011 to 2013 there have been 151 pedestrian fatalities in New Mexico resulting in a crash rate of 3.01 fatalities per 100,000 population. **This three-year pedestrian fatality rate is the highest in the nation.**

- **Elders and Youth:** By the year 2030, the Census Bureau predicts that roughly 50% of New Mexico’s population will be over 65 and under 18. In 2014, roughly 40% of NM’s population fills these two ends of the spectrum. The good news is that Complete Streets serves both groups, allowing for mobility independence at both ends of New Mexicans’ life cycle.
- **Creatively address transportation needs:** Transportation agencies are faced with the need for creative solutions to growing transportation needs with limited budgets. Pursuing both land and transportation policies that support Complete Streets add benefit by addressing air quality and providing opportunities for improved stormwater catchment.
- **Public Health:** Research continually points to communities that are more friendly to biking and walking also have better health outcomes.

Percent Population Diagnosed with Diabetes (2010) and Percent of workers who Walk or Bicycle to Work (2008-2012) by State



CORRECTING MYTHS ABOUT COMPLETE STREETS

- **Complete Streets do not cost a lot** – The most successful implementation of Complete Streets policies integrate multimodal elements into general roadway projects. It is incremental and takes advantage of opportunities. There is no mandate that all streets need to be retrofitted at once. Ped/bike projects are much cheaper than roadway widening projects. Paint costs very little, but it can have a transformative effect. Trees make the street look and feel better.
- **Complete Streets are for rural areas, too** – People often walk and bike along rural roads to get to their destinations. Rural complete streets solutions include shoulder bikeways, multi-purpose separated trails, and roundabouts with bike and pedestrian safety features. Small towns benefit from the same kinds of complete streets improvements found in larger cities, such as sidewalks and safe crossings.
- **Change in practices** – Providing for the needs of all transportation modes and conducting further public outreach is relatively new for transportation departments. Getting up to speed requires training and changing practices.

Fortunately, new research shows that driving lanes in urban areas do not need to be so wide and that innovative treatments can help pedestrians cross roads more safely. In addition, the Federal Highway Administration has endorsed several new guides on how to accommodate for all modes. These include the National Association of City Transportation Officials' Urban Street Design Guide, Bikeway Design Guide, and the Institute of Transportation Engineers' Walkable Urban Thoroughfares.

TOP CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING COMPLETE STREETS

- Institutional resistance within government

- Public perception about speed versus steady traffic throughput
- Cultural dominance of the car
- Budgets and the need for cost sharing with the private sector
- Sprawl growth that consumes capital costs and requires stretching roadway rehabilitation budgets further

FURTHER SUPPORT: NEW MEXICO COMPLETE STREETS LEADERSHIP TEAM

The New Mexico Complete Streets Leadership Team (NMCSLT) was formed in December of 2010. NMCSLT participants are from government, private sector, and non-profit organizations. The organization's primary purpose is to educate about Complete Streets and provide information to the people of New Mexico who are concerned about the health and safety of our streets.

The NMCSLT works toward the adoption and implementation of Complete Streets policies and design standards throughout the state. NMCSLT provides information about the latest initiatives, events, training opportunities and news on Complete Streets in New Mexico. NMCSLT provides presentations, letters of support, and technical expertise.

www.completestreetsnm.org

EXAMPLES OF COMPLETE STREETS AROUND NM



Governor Mills Rd, Santa Fe, NM

MORE EXAMPLES OF COMPLETE STREETS AROUND NM



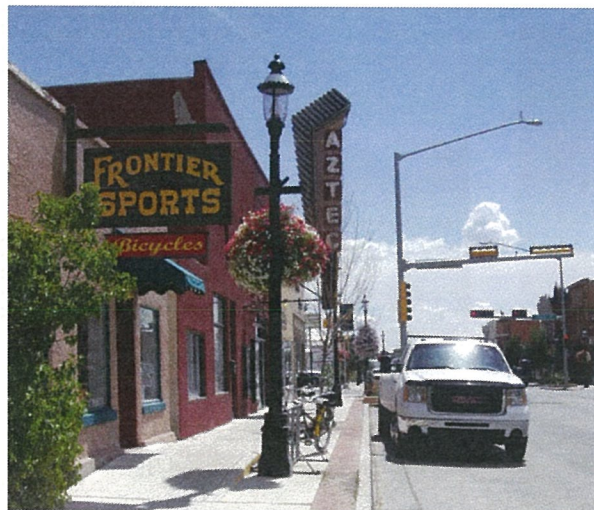
Martin Luther King Boulevard
BEFORE
Albuquerque, NM



Martin Luther King Boulevard
AFTER



Camino Carlos Rey, Santa Fe, NM



U.S. 550, Aztec, NM



N.M. 124, Pueblo of Laguna, NM



N.M. 4, Jemez Springs, NM



U.S. 550, Cuba, NM



N.M. 333, Edgewood, NM



Becker Ave, Belen, NM



Main St, Las Cruces, NM



Frost Rd, Unincorporated Bernalillo County, NM